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Parody, Satire and Quixotism in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

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1. In the realm of confusing and/or confused literary terms, parody and satire occupy a place of privilege, and not precisely for the absence of studies which make clear their meaning and differences. Margaret Rose, Joseph Dane, and Linda Hutcheon, among others, have aptly explained those differences. Both parody and satire are a commentary—usually negative and burlesque, bent upon producing a comic effect (although for Hutcheon this is only one possible effect among others)—on a recognisable referent. It is the nature of this referent which makes all the difference: in Dane's terms, *verba* (words), that is, expression or system of signs, for parody; and *res* (things), that is, content or states of existence, for satire. The parodic target includes texts, generic rules, literary conventions, styles, and language. The satiric one comprises social structures and norms, attitudes, habits, ideas, systems of thought. In Hutcheon's terms, one is intramural, the other extramural. Or, using Ziva Ben Porat's definition (quoted in Hutcheon 1985), parody represents in a critical and comic way a modelled—in a linguistic or literary way—reality, which is itself a representation of an original reality, whereas satire is a comic and critical representation of a non-modelled reality. This theoretical distinction between parody and satire, however, has not always had an adequate reflection in practical criticism, which has frequently mixed them up, sometimes—and yet not always—because of the simultaneous presence of both in certain works. But it is precisely in these works that the distinction is paramount, not only because the confusion of the satiric and parodic targets would imply a misunderstanding or a misinterpretation of them, but also because the gamut and shades of the relationships that parody and satire may establish within these works are so rich and varied that missing those relationships would imply a considerable loss. Such is the case of Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613) and Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) which, as will be shown below, is a more than probable model for Beaumont's parodic and satiric procedures. *Don Quixote* set the example for a new kind of parody as well as of satire, and Beaumont was the first author to understand that example and to explore and exploit its potential[1].

1 The question of Cervantes' influence on Beaumont has been amply—if not thoroughly—discussed in several articles (Schevill 1907, Wilson 1948, Gale 1972, Bliss 1987, Sánchez 1995). Some of these, however, seem to be more concerned with documenting the possibility of this influence (sometimes from external rather than from internal evidence), than with studying the intertextual connection in depth. Or, to put it another way, they try to solve the problem posed by the fact that *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was written (c. 1607) before the first English translation—Shelton's—of *Don Quixote* was published

It can safely be argued that both parody and satire in *Don Quixote* result or derive from the Quixotic madness. This is basically (leaving aside its hallucinatory effects, which are the accidents, not the essentials, of that madness) a way of reading—literature as reality, reality as literature. And this is the quintessence of Quixotism. This way of reading not only implies the confusion of reality and fiction (chivalric romances interpreted as history, surrounding reality interpreted as a chivalric romance) as well as of ethics and aesthetics (Don Quixote does not assimilate simply the values and ethos of chivalric romances, but above all the literary form those adopt, which for him are inseparable from them). But it also implies, through the Don's imitation of chivalric heroes which goes hand in hand with those confusions, the conversion of reading into action, of the reader into actor, and even author. This is so because that imitation, convinced as Don Quixote is that there is an enchanter who will register his adventures for literary posterity, is nothing but the writing of a chivalric romance with his actions—instead of with a pen, as he intended to do at the beginning of the book—and with himself in the flesh—instead of with an ink and paper fantasised projection of himself—as protagonist. This creates an incongruence or contrast between the chivalric romance Don Quixote thinks he is staging or writing and the reality which is its context and is provided by Cervantes in his anti-chivalric novel (or, within this novel, by the characters who laugh at Don Quixote and stage several deceptions, especially in the second part when they have already read the first one); or, in other words, between the book on his mind and the book on the author's, reader's and the other characters'/readers' minds. And it is from this incongruence that parody, the burlesque and ridicule of chivalric romances, results.

This incongruence results also in satire, although not of the values and ideology encoded in romances, but of those of a society which has turned its back on them and has substituted degraded materialism for chivalric idealism. Cervantes, unlike the Don, separates the ethics from the aesthetics: he criticises the aesthetic form, which is unrealistic and anachronistic, but not its romantic ethos, which in moral terms is superior to surrounding reality; he effects a parody of the literary genre, but a satire of the contemporary world. Curiously enough, it is the Don's confusion of ethics and aesthetics which allows Cervantes to separate his parodic and satiric targets: in his mistaken way of reading and acting/writing Don Quixote projects on the world both certain literary ideas and values (ethics) which carry an implicit critique of reality, and certain literary forms (aesthetics) which are criticised by reality. The Cervantean parodic and satiric procedures are thus based on the particular condition of Don Quixote as a reader, on what one could call *satire on reading*. By this I mean the presentation of a radical case of misreading, of a negative example of reading (which implies both literary reception and literary production), whose shortcomings and deficiencies carry out a critique both of literature (parody) and reality (satire); or, in other words, the ridiculing of a reader

(1612). This unfortunate stress on external evidence as a means to demonstrate or negate influence has resulted in the neglect of internal one, of the much more interesting analysis of the complex and deep relationships between both texts, which offer the most solid ground to argue for or against influence and which are the topic of this paper.

in order to effect an attack on the objects of his reading, be it literature (aesthetics) or the reality he reads through that literature (ethics). This is one of the most fruitful inventions in literary history, and one that Beaumont reproduces for similar parodic and satiric purposes in his *Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

2. If *Don Quixote* incorporates two versions—Don Quixote's and Cervantes'—of the same story, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* comprises two different stories in the same play—"The London Merchant", acted by professional actors following a script, and "The Knight of the Burning Pestle", improvised by two London citizens, George and his wife Nell, who are part of the audience, with the collaboration of his apprentice Rafe and the actors themselves. The scenes of this latter story are represented between the scenes of the former, alternating with them, sometimes even interfering with them or getting into them, and thus posing a permanent threat of disruption, transformation, even destruction for "The London Merchant" (a threat which is voiced by the boy on different occasions). George and Nell's participation is not limited to their improvisation: sitting comfortably onstage, they periodically interrupt and comment on both plays. The citizens, in their dual role as outspoken spectators and improvised authors, are thus the essential linking device between both interior plays; but they are also the key to the Cervantism of the play as a whole, since, as in *Don Quixote*, their Quixotism is the basis of the parodic and satiric strategies and targets which both plays have in common.

"The London Merchant" is itself a parody, although not a Quixotic one. As Doebler has remarked (1965: 333), it is a mock-play after what he called the Prodigal Son plays, a group of plays which exalt the values of thrift as opposed to prodigality (and therefore the middle-class values of London citizens) by means of a romantic or love plot. This plot couples examples of one and the other in brothers, sisters, sometimes apprentices (thus exploring relationships between parents and children as well as between master and apprentices), follows the Biblical pattern of folly, repentance and reintegration, and is set in a city domestic milieu[2]. The pattern, as represented by plays like the anonymous *The London Prodigal* (c. 1604), *Eastward Hoe* (1605), by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston, or even, in a more romantic strain, Thomas Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (1599), is clearly inverted by "The London Merchant". This we can observe in its two lines of action. (a) One of them narrates how the apprentice Jasper is dismissed by his master Venturewell for corresponding the love of the merchant's daughter, Lucy, while Venturewell has chosen for her the rich but insipid Humphrey. Here, unlike the Prodigal Son plays, Jasper—in fact an exemplary apprentice forced to be rebellious and wayward by Venturewell's greedy and mercantile view of marriage, and not a prodigal at all despite being described as such by his own mother—finally wins Lucy after fleeing with her and undergoing a series of adventures. In addition to this, Humphrey, the parental candidate, appears as ridiculous and unable to conquer Lucy and thus to fulfil the role of romantic lover, partly because of his

2 The ideology underlying these and similar plays that may be grouped as popular domestic drama is well discussed by Alexander Leggatt, who writes that "the domestic drama of the period deals naturally with threats to security of the middle-class world, of which prodigality and adultery are the principal ones. It normally contains those threats by showing a fundamentally healthy society, and a fundamentally decent human nature, that allow kindness and forgiveness to have their way at the end; even tragedy is generally turned towards pity" (1988: 185).

inability to keep this role separate from the prosaic commercial worldview which pervades all his deeds and words, and which echoes Venturewell's. (b) The other line of action concerns Jasper's family, and how the carefree and prodigal but charming and attractive Mr Merrythought, his father, defeats in a certain way the spendthrift and prudent but miserly and unattractive Mrs Merrythought, who, after abandoning her husband, is forced by circumstances to return home and submissively ask for admission. Michael, Jasper's brother, is a ridiculous version of Mrs Merrythought's values and worldview in the same way as Humphrey was of Venturewell's. This worldview firmly associates Venturewell with Mrs Merrythought, and is defeated by Jasper and his father in their respective lines of actions.

Hence these characters are a challenge—and a successful one—both to the conventions of a certain kind of play and to the mercantile and petty-bourgeois values articulated through them, thus making clear the satiric implications of parody, as Doebler has remarked: "What purpose does this parody serve for *The Knight* as a whole? The parody satirises the middle-class identifying of material and moral values that created the stock pattern of the Prodigal Son play. This confusion of values created a genre partly because it is a stock response to the complexities of an often unjust world" (1965: 343). The target is both the ethics and the aesthetics that gave literary shape to them, parody is used in the service of satire. Furthermore, the uninterrupted commentary from George and Nell on "The London Merchant" reinforces this parodic and satiric dimension. Their comments exhibit their identification with Venturewell, Humphrey and Mrs Merrythought as well as their hostility against Jasper and Mr Merrythought; these feelings underline their affinities with the former characters, include them in the satiric butt, and thus make even more explicit the ideology and social class which are under attack[3]. At the same time, their comments also display their anxiety and uneasiness before the turn of events in "The London Merchant" as well as their readiness to thwart it in order to fulfil their wishes and those of the characters they sympathise with. These wishes coincide with the conventions being burlesqued, so that the parodic subversion from which satire arises is made explicit.

Parody and satire in "The London Merchant" show no traces of the Quixotic. But the citizens' uneasiness about these parodic and satiric dimensions drive them to stage the other interior play—"The Knight"—as an alternative, a challenge, even a threat, to "The London Merchant". It is precisely the staging of that play, and their becoming improvised authors and not simple spectators, which places parody and satire in a Cervantean key, since these are articulated through the characters' Quixotism. This Quixotism is both the citizens', so far neglected but the most profound and complex

3 The satire of the middle-class ethos is thus extended to the whole play, since it not only concerns the characters of the interior play, but also the citizens who are watching it and who voluntarily associate with them. For Doebler, Mrs Merrythought is the thematic link between "The London Merchant" and the citizens. After demonstrating this assertion, Doebler concludes: "Mistress Merry-thought, the Citizen, and his wife are all automatically on the side of vested interest—in this case Venturewell—and either cannot or will not see the disparity between facts or intended characterisations and their own prejudices ... Stock forms imply stock values and stock values can be satirised. Thus Beaumont satirises easy middle-class morality *through* a ridicule of the Citizen and his wife, in turn a satire of stock responses *through* the parody of a stock dramatic form" (1965:343-44).

(perhaps that is the reason for the neglect), and Rafe's, the most evident and discussed but nonetheless derivative from the citizens' Quixotism.

3. In "The Knight" Rafe plays the part of a shop-keeper who is also a compulsive reader of chivalric romances (in his first appearance on stage he reads aloud a fragment from *Palmerín de Inglaterra*) and who, like the Don, decides to imitate these books and becomes a knight errant, a metamorphosis which also includes that of his two apprentices into squire and dwarf. The incongruence between the high and the low, the knightly and the shopping spheres, is perfectly epitomised in his self-designation as *grocer errant* as well as in the pestle which he uses as a chivalric weapon and which features prominently on his shield and in the chivalric name he invents for himself. It is exactly the same incongruence that is at the core of *Don Quixote*, used in the service of the same parodic target—chivalric romance. As in *Don Quixote*, it is transferred to linguistic terms and underlined by the contrast between the chivalric language he teaches his subordinates and their own language or the contents they pour into that adopted language: "Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, here is a distressed damsel, to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper" (29)[4]. This initial incongruence is extended in a series of adventures of an unquestionably Quixotic nature: the one of the Bell inn that Rafe mistakes for a castle, although he is finally forced to pay the reckoning reluctantly (an episode identical with one in *Don Quixote*); the adventure concerning the liberation of giant Barbaroso's prisoners, actually the clients and patients—suffering from syphilis—of a barber whose activities are comically described in chivalric terms (a fake adventure fabricated by the host and Nick the barber, two characters in "The London Merchant", which resembles not just the adventures of Mambrino's helmet and the galley slaves in *Don Quixote*, as some critics have remarked, but also those counterfeited by the priest, the barber, whose name is also Nicolás, and some hosts of Don Quixote's in the first part of the novel); or the episode of princess Pompiona of Moldavia, whose amorous advances meet with Rafe's indifference because his heart belongs to Susan, a cobbler's maid in Milk Street, and whose hospitality (which, unlike that at the inn, should be appreciated in chivalric, not economic terms) Rafe, at the citizens' request, rewards with a ridiculous amount of money; and finally the mock-epic reviewing of the London militia, full of details of common life and bawdy puns. The similarities with *Don Quixote* are too close to be overlooked[5].

4 Rafe's linguistic self-consciousness, his awareness of the importance of language, similar to Don Quixote's, is clear not only in his teaching his apprentices a proper and courteous way of expressing themselves, but in one of his earliest assertions, in which this incongruence or even open conflict between old-fashioned chivalry and a crass modern world is also clear: "There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age: they will call one 'the son of a whore', that Palmerin of England would have called 'fair sir'; and one that Rosicleer would have called 'right beauteous damsel', they will call 'damned bitch'" (27).

5 The similarities were rightly summed up by Wilson (1948: 35), and they have been studied in a detailed, exhaustive and thorough way by Gale (1972: 90-94). They have been repeated, almost in the same order as they are presented in Gale, by Sánchez, with a few slight differences, the most interesting of which concerns a supposed trace of Ginés de Pasamonte in the inn-keeper (1995: 80-81). Bliss also makes reference to Pasamonte and the two episodes (the Bell inn and Barbaroso's cave) which are the clearest parallels with *Don Quixote* (1987: 365).

But still, to this basic incongruence which one could designate internal (within "The Knight"), may be added an external one which originates in the contact, or even the contest, between this adventure or romance play and the domestic, real-life comedy which frames it—"The London Merchant". The attempt of this adventure play to glorify the everyday is set in the context of a play which glories in the everyday, and this general disparity becomes specific in those episodes in which Rafe slips into "The London Merchant" to take his chivalric action into this realm of the plain and ordinary, an unmistakably Quixotic enterprise. The results are as catastrophic as in *Don Quixote*: he fights Jasper to liberate Luce but is defeated and beaten (the corrective of reality in the form of blows which is a feature of Quixotic adventures); Mrs Merrythought mistakes him for a giant, runs away in panic, and in so doing loses her purse and a casket with all her savings; Rafe promises to recover them for her, but fails to do so. "The London Merchant" thus provides the parodic context to some of Rafe's adventures integrating "The Knight", as so does *Don Quixote* to Don Quixote's adventures integrating the "Don Quixote" imagined by him. We could even say that "The London Merchant", in a different sense, provides that parodic context to *all* his adventures, as far as it is the actors of the "Merchant" who also become the secondary characters in the improvised "Knight", and they seem to create or at least be partially responsible for the ridiculing quixotic incongruence appearing not only in the clash between "Knight" and "Merchant" (Jasper beating Rafe) but also within the "Knight" itself (the inn, Barbaroso, Pompiona and militia episodes). Their attitude may be interpreted as a kind of defensive reaction against a play–"The Knight"—which threatens to disrupt their own play—the "Merchant"—, as Lee Bliss has argued[6], in the same way as "The Knight" is the citizens' defensive reaction against the threat posed by the "Merchant" to the kind of play they expect to view.

Bliss is right when he asserts that "the players easily ridicule the citizens' aspiration to gentility by placing Rafe's dramatic fantasy—its language, situations, social pretensions—in a mundane, real-life context of country inns and syphilitic patients" (1984: 19). The players are thus a kind of parodists within the play set up by the citizens and Rafe, and the parallelism with Don Quixote's friends in the first part of the novel, and especially with all the characters in the second part who stage mock-chivalric adventures to laugh at the Don and amuse themselves, is evident. These characters create a dramatic illusion, they improvise episodes following the Don's romantic models, as these actors do following the citizens': the characters of *Don Quixote* are improvised players who effect a parody of chivalric romance similar to the one effected by the professional players of "The London Merchant". If we accept this sense in which the "Merchant", both the play and its actors, is the frame of the

6 Bliss explains how the players, at a certain point, after suffering Rafe's continuing challenge to their play's integrity, after trying "to accommodate Rafe while continuing their own script" (1984: 10), after defying Rafe and then beating him out of their play, "turn from their own production to revenge themselves on their citizen tormentors" (1984: 11), and they do it by creating "two scenes for Rafe's knightly romance—'The Reckoning of the Bell Inn' and 'Barbaroso's Cave'—meant to ridicule Rafe and his sponsors before the gentlemen's spectators" (1984: 12), and later by "enacting, mockingly, the subsidiary characters necessary to the new and wildly different scenes the citizens now request (Princess Pompiona and the incompetent crew Rafe drills at Mile-End)" (1984: 12).

"Knight", and not simply one interior play at the same level as the other, the separation drawn above between interior and exterior Quixotic incongruence dissolves. It is not just that the clash between the "Don Quixote" imagined by the Don himself and the *Don Quixote* written by Cervantes becomes the clash between the two interior plays: the Cervantean hostility between chivalric romance and the anti-romantic reality framing it is also transformed by Beaumont into the hostility between the "Knight" and the "Merchant" framing it. The distinctive Cervantean character of this parody, effected through the Quixotism of Rafe and the resulting Quixotic incongruence, is highlighted by the simultaneous presence of the non Cervantean parody within "The London Merchant" examined above.

4. And yet, if Rafe is a Quixote within "The Knight", he is not the real Quixote of *The Knight*. Rafe's Quixotism could be defined as secondary or of a second degree: he is an actor playing a part, that of Quixotic knight, following the citizens' directions. He is Quixotic as grocer errant in the interior play staged by the citizens, but not as Rafe, the citizens' apprentice, in the overall play[7]. The Cervantean parody through incongruence actually originates, not in Rafe's fake Quixotism, but in the citizens' real one: they plant "The Knight" in the midst of "The London Merchant", and, in so doing, they are succumbing to the Quixotic way of reading, or, in this case, receiving a literary or artistic artefact (since they are spectators and not readers). Like Don Quixote, they try to make romantic an anti-romantic reality, that is, a merchant—within the "Knight"—and the "Merchant"—by means of the "Knight". If the Don attempted—and of course failed—to transform himself into a chivalric hero and a hostile anti-romantic reality into a chivalric romance, they attempt—and of course fail—to transform a grocer—a merchant and therefore an image of themselves—into a knight and a hostile anti-citizen play—"The London Merchant"—into a citizen romance or pro-citizen celebration. The source of this behaviour is of course the same confusions as spectators that we saw in Don Quixote as a reader, and of course a similar disposition to become authors of their own romance, and not simple romance readers (spectators), to fulfil their daydreams creatively, actively, and not just passively. In their change from mere spectators to authors—although not through their own deeds, like the Don, who is also an actor, but through Rafe's performance as an actor—they are true Quixotic readers (spectators), and *The Knight* a true satire on reading (viewing) in Cervantean fashion[8].

7 The difference is remarked by Wilson, and later by Sánchez when she asserts that "...la posición de Rafe es fría y calculada: Rafe está actuando, con énfasis en lo de actuar, porque su amo se lo ordena. Don Quijote no está actuando, por lo menos en el primer libro; él vive sus andanzas y cree en ellas, para don Quijote los molinos son gigantes encantados de verdad" (1948: 77).

8 In addition to Rafe and the citizens, one could still add another figure with less evident but certain Quixotic features: Humphrey. These are highlighted by Glenn Steinberg's comments on Humphrey's inability to carry out the love plot in which he is supposed to be the lover: "Humphrey, however, utterly fails as a performer ... Humphrey lacks any sense of how to construct an effective 'plot'. But he is not aware of his failure in this larger context, still perceiving himself in the role of the lover... The discrepancy between the role he actually plays..., and the role that he believes himself to play leads him again and again into unintentional burlesque" (1991: 213). Don Quixote is also a victim of the same discrepancy, and so is Rafe, as Steinberg indicates, thus drawing a parallelism between Humphrey and Rafe which points to their similar Quixotic core: "In much the same way, Rafe resembles Humphrey in his complete lack of theatrical sense. From the start, he is not aware of the ludicrousness of his 'part' ... Rafe's erroneous image of

In staging the "Knight" to counteract the parodic and satiric "Merchant", the citizens not only try to adapt the latter to their own ideas, both ethic and aesthetic, but they also try to cancel it out by presenting an alternative, an antidote, as it were. On the one hand, Rafe is ready to help the characters they identify with in "The London Merchant", so that the play may finish in a way not inimical to their ideas. On the other, Rafe has his own play, "The Knight", and this is intended to be not simply a dramatic chivalric romance, but one of those contemporary plays which made London citizens the protagonists of marvellous romantic adventures and which exalted them to positions of prominence (thus exalting their class and the city in general). It is the kind of play described by Bliss as a "heywoodian citizen-adventure play" (1984: 13), which, in John Jump's words, "links the most extravagant adventures with the most extravagant adulation of the city" (1972: 57). The type was well represented by Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* (1600), mentioned by the citizens themselves as a model for their "Knight" (85), by Day, Rowley and Wilkin's *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), also an implicit model for the citizens (84), or, in a more city-patriotic strain, by Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (c. 1599) and similar plays mentioned by the citizen in the induction (12). The citizens' resort to episodes which usually featured in those plays, such as those of Princess Pompiona, the Lord of May, and the drill of the citizen troops, clearly associates "The Knight" with them.

And yet, if they failed in their attempts to put a curb on "The London Merchant", to transform its parody into the model it parodies (a Prodigal Son play), and therefore to deflect its satirical thrust against their class and ideology, they also fail in these creative efforts. As a result of the Quixotic incongruencies in "The Knight" already discussed, instead of one of those citizen-adventure plays, they produce—with the unrequested collaboration of the actors, as we have seen—a parody of it, with similar satiric implications: a mock-exaltation of the aspirations and values represented by citizen romances is an ironic way of criticising them. As Jump has remarked, "while burlesquing one popular kind of drama in *The London Merchant*, he [Beaumont] burlesques a second through the sequence of disconnected adventures which the Citizen and his wife devise for their apprentice" (1972: 56). Jump adds later:

> He [Beaumont] ridicules the attitudes and values of his victims by means of the direct satirical representation of the Citizen and his Wife. He ridicules their tastes by means of the two mock-plays, *The London Merchant* and the plot of the knight-errant. In these he burlesques respectively the domestic drama and the adventure drama as composed for citizen audiences; and in Rafe's infatuation with tales of chivalry he burlesques, often by parody, one of the citizens' favourite forms of reading. (1972: 57)

himself as the glorious Knight of the Burning Pestle thus repeatedly leads him into unintentional burlesque, much as Humphrey's exalted self-image did" (1991: 218-19). And, using the idea of the players as parodists mentioned above, Steinberg adds: "Furthermore, Rafe, like Humphrey, becomes an unwitting performer in a 'plot' that merrily makes a fool of him. The players prepare a 'plot' against Rafe, just as Jasper and Lucy prepared theirs against Humphrey" (1991: 219).

Both interior plays in *The Knight* are a parodic transformation of two different kinds of drama—citizen comedy and citizen romance—expressing a similar ideology—one in domestic, the other in chivalric terms—which is satirised through parody. The difference lies in the deliberate and non Cervantean character of parody in "The London Merchant" and the undeliberate (since not intended by the citizens) but Cervantean character of parody in "The Knight". In any case, the satiric impact of parody in "The Knight" reinforces that of the "Merchant", and again is itself reinforced by the citizens' comments on their own play, which make explicit the satiric target, intensify the critique levelled at it, and include the citizens in such a target.

The citizens' Quixotic failure in writing the romance they intend is coupled by their inability to realise that failure, to appreciate that the result of their efforts is mock-romance and not romance. They seem to be happy with the play being represented, unaware, like Don Quixote, of the differences between their models and their imitation, between what they think they are staging (romance) and what is actually being staged (parody). In this sense, the Quixotic incongruence between the book he thinks he is writing with his deeds and the book actually written is translated into the incongruence not only between the "Knight" and the "Merchant", already commented on, but also, in more literal terms, between the "Knight" as they plan and see it, and the "Knight" as it turns out and the audience see it (the audience within the *The Knight* itself, the gentlemen, but also outside it, ourselves). If the first incongruence was external as far as it concerned two different plays, the second one is internal not only because it concerns the same play but also because the disparity between the two versions of it is of a psychological nature, and therefore closer to the Quixotic incongruence. This is another manifestation of that Quixotic misreading or even blindness, the inability to interpret or receive a literary work properly, and this takes us to the core of the citizens' Quixotic condition which is the ultimate source of their behaviour and of the resulting parody and satire. The origins of that Quixotic misreading are of course the same confusions between ethics and aesthetics and between reality and fiction that we saw in the Don.

The citizens' critical appreciation—or rather mis-appreciation—of "The London Merchant" as well as their improvisation of "The Knight", their double condition as spectators and authors, both reveal their incapacity to separate their view of the real world from that of a fictional one. Like Don Quixote, whose worldview is inseparable from an art form, they posit a perfect correspondence between ethics and aesthetics, so they do not accept an art form unless it fits into their worldview. As Bliss says, they apply to art their real-life categories: "For George and Nell ... drama is as fresh as life; and, partly because the play's story and characters are close to their own experience, they consistently misread those cues ...What they would censure in life, they reject in art" (1984: 8). They misjudge the aesthetic value of a play because it challenges their ethical values, so they challenge it through their commentary and their staging of another play (which they also misjudge for the same reasons, in this case because it apparently suits their values). This confusion of art and life, which does not admit other art than that which reflects one's life and ideology (Don Quixote does not admit another life and ideology than that reflected in his art) is even more evident in the way the citizens let themselves be drawn into the dramatic illusion of the play they

are watching: like Don Quixote, they do not separate reality from fiction as they do not distinguish ethics and aesthetics. This is clear in their willingness to participate and in their actual participation in the events taking place onstage as if they were real events. George prevents Rafe from being arrested by paying his expenses at the Bell Inn, Nell asks her husband to raise the watch at Ludgate when she thinks that Jasper really wants to kill Luce, they both try to persuade the characters in the play to act in a certain way or reprimand them for not doing it (and there are many more examples scattered throughout the whole play). While watching the play they are all the time living through it and involved in it in an active way. Don Quixote applies to life art categories, he lives as he reads; the citizens apply to art life categories, they read (view) as they live. Don Quixote deals with reality as if it were literature; the citizens deal with literature (drama) as if it were reality. In both cases, the separation between art and life collapses.

5. George and Nell are the unifying element—or even consciousness—of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. They embody in the flesh the aesthetics and the ethics under attack in both interior plays, they are the real, or at least the most immediate, satiric butts. What is really being satirised, however, beyond or prior to their ideology and worldview, is their Quixotic condition as spectators and authors, or, in other words, this Quixotic condition is the means to carry out Beaumont's parody and satire in a novel, innovative way, which we have called satire on reading and which was first used by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*. In this respect, the most important difference between both authors is that in *The Knight* the parodic and satiric targets coincide or are associated, so parody is subordinated to or is a means for satire. In *Don Quixote* parody and satire remain separated, their targets are not only different but even opposed, and parody has the upper hand over satire. Beaumont criticises certain ethics represented by Quixotic spectators through the burlesque or the parodic distortion of the aesthetics associated with those ethics; Cervantes criticises certain aesthetics represented by a Quixotic reader through parody, but the ethics associated with those aesthetics are used to criticise the ethics of the non-Quixotic characters who laugh at the Quixotic reader. This implies that the ultimate assessment of Quixotism in Cervantes is not wholly negative. And yet, despite theses differences, something similar happens in Beaumont regarding the citizens' Quixotism, although for different reasons.

In *Don Quixote* the Don's idealism has a value in itself when separated from the anachronistic literary shape it adopts and the hallucinatory delusion in which it indulges, and especially when contrasted with the materialistic characters in the world around him. Don Quixote is mad but morally superior to his sane but morally degraded society. In a limited and very modern way, Don Quixote is a hero, and this heroic dimension in the Don, first spotted by the German Romantics, highlights the character's duality, his condition as both deluded fool (an instrument for parody) and alienated hero (an instrument for satire). In this view, the Quixotic disruption of the stale life surrounding him has the vitality and freshness of a carnivalesque and liberating disruption of a stagnant order. These contradictions and complexity within the Quixotic figure are further stressed by his goodness and common sense in all matters not touching the chivalric. In *The Knight* the citizens possess something of the same

complexity. The citizens' Quixotism has also a positive aspect which has been pointed out by some critics: their artistic naïveté, their imaginative and creative thrust (which allows them to immerse themselves in the dramatic illusion and to improvise their own dramatic illusion), their liberating capacity to turn the stage upside down, to change fixed roles and open up closed stories. The citizens' Quixotic behaviour produces the effect of life's irruption on the stage, a carnivalesque disruption, not of life, but of a play, of the stale order represented by a written script, even of the gentlemen's elitist theatrical establishment, which the citizens challenge from their popular and naïve position. The citizens are not simple satiric butts, but share in Don Quixote's duality. And this dual and even contradictory nature increases if we consider that they are both a carnivalesque challenge to the aesthetic code and at the same time supporters of the ethic code challenged by the carnivalesque Merrythought, or, as Bliss has remarked, that they are addicts to the romantic daydreaming and wish-fulfilment of "The Knight" which they deny to Rafe and Luce in "The London Merchant" (of course because one exalts, the other challenges, their ethos). Don Quixote, in similar fashion, is both a carnivalesque challenge to the ethic code of those surrounding him, especially Sancho, and at the same time supporter of the aesthetic code challenged by the carnivalesque Sancho and other characters. As this parallel makes clear, however, this common duality should not conceal the differences between the citizens and Don Quixote. The positive side of Quixotism in both plays stems from opposite reasons: ethic, in the Don's case, aesthetic, in the citizens'.

Curiously enough, despite all these resemblances, the Quixotism of the citizens discussed in this paper has passed unnoticed. Most scholars dealing with the topic of Cervantes and Beaumont have traced the imitation of Cervantes to the Quixotism of Rafe and his adventures. As a consequence of this and of the problem of dates mentioned above, many Beaumont scholars have pronounced this imitation either inexistent or superficial. The point I have attempted to make is that there are subtler but deeper forms of Quixotism in the play, and, most important, that they pervade the play as a whole (and not just one plot of the play, Rafe's). The Quixotism of the citizens, the real protagonists of Beaumont's play, is less evident, but it takes us from restricted and isolated traits to larger matters of conception and execution of the play. Resemblance between *Don Quixote* and *The Knight* is not just a question of similarity in Quixotic characters or adventures, Rafe's, but of Cervantean strategies for parody and satire based on the citizen's more complex and richer Quixotism. We could say of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* what a later and also subtler imitator of *Don Quixote*, Henry Fielding, said of one of his works, that it was "written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes" (and not only of his Quixotic matter, we could add). Beaumont, especially when compared with other English imitators of Cervantes in the seventeenth century such as Edmund Gayton, Thomas D'Urfey, and even Samuel Butler [9], is the only author who goes beyond the farcical and facetious view of Quixotism which dominated at the time (as Edwin Knowles has demonstrated [1941 and 1947]), and who uses Quixotism for parodic and satiric purposes which place him in the footsteps of Cervantism. In this

9 Edmund Gayton, *Pleasant Notes on the History and Adventures of Don Quixote* (1654); Samuel Butler, *Hudibras* (1663, 1664, 1678); Thomas D'Urfey, *The Comical History of Don Quixote* (1694, 1696).

sense, Beaumont's imitation truly anticipates in its depth, complexity and creativity, that of Fielding's in *Joseph Andrews* more than one century later.

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